

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed October 6, 2003 has been received and the Examiner's comments carefully reviewed. Claims 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 13, 14, 21, 22, 23, and 28 have been amended. Claims 1, 24 and 25 have been canceled without prejudice to their future prosecution. Claim 3 has been rewritten in independent form to include all the limitations of claim 1 that has been canceled. Claims 2, 4, and 5 have been rewritten to depend from independent claim 3. Claims 7-10 and 15-18 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but were indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. These claims have now been rewritten as new claims 31-34 and 35-38, respectively. No new subject matter has been added. Claims 2-23, and 26-38 are currently pending. The Applicant respectfully submits that the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

Objections to Drawings

In the Office Action, the Examiner has objected to the drawings, stating that latch 64 engaged to strap 50 is not clearly shown. A view like that of Almond, FIG. 3, was recommended to be added to clearly depict such feature. A replacement drawing sheet including changes to FIG. 35 to show the latch 64 engaged to the strap 50 has been submitted to address the objections to the drawings. The Specification has been amended accordingly as seen in the Amendments to the Specification, to discuss the changes made to FIG. 35.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claims 3 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. In order to advance this application to allowance, claims 3 and 14 have been amended. In claim 3, the preamble has been rewritten to say "A cover assembly for covering an open end of an outlet box, the outlet box having a strap, the assembly comprising:". In claim 14, "connector modules" has been changed to "a connector

module." The amendments to claims 3 and 14 are intended to be clarifying only and are not intended to narrow the scope of the claims in any manner. No new matter has been added.

The Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claims 3 and 14.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102 and 103

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claim 24 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Welch. Claim 24 has been cancelled. Thus, the Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of claim 24 is now moot.

Claim 30 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Lane. Claim 30, as amended, recites an outlet assembly including a cable connector module positioned at the open end of the outlet box assembly, wherein the cable connector module includes a cable connector positioned to be accessible through the plate aperture of the cover plate and a flexible mounting tab on the cable connector module including a ramped lip for snap mounting the cable connector module to the outlet box assembly. Unlike the invention of claim 30, Lane does not include an outlet box assembly where the cable connector module is snap fitted to the outlet box assembly. In Lane, the edge connectors 150A and 150B are the only connectors engaged to the outlet box assembly. The connectors positioned to be accessible through the plate aperture of the cover plate in Lane are the data interface assemblies 200 and 390, which are not snap fitted to the outlet box assembly in Lane. In Lane, the edge connectors 150A and 150B connect to the data interface assemblies 200 and 390 without the data interface assemblies ever being snap fitted to the outlet box. The box in Lane is adapted to snap fit with the edge connectors, which are not cable connectors and are not positioned to be accessible through the plate aperture of the cover plate. Therefore, Lane fails to teach all of the elements set forth in claim 30. Moreover, Lane provides no motivation to make the cable connector modules snap fit with the outlet box assembly since the edge connectors which connect to the cable connector modules already snap fit to the outlet box. For at least this reason claim 30 is believed to be patentable over Lane.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection.

Claim 30 has also been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Garthwaite. Claim 30, as amended, recites an outlet assembly including means held by the cover plate for preventing the removal of the cable connector module from the outlet box assembly without first removing the means. The structure disclosed in the specification of the present application associated with the means recited in claim 30 is the insert piece. The insert, held by the cover plate, has to be removed first before the flexible mounting tab on cable connector module can be accessed and the cable connector module snapped off from the strap which is fastened to the outlet box assembly. The insert needs to be removed first before the cable connector module can be snapped off because the insert piece covers the mounting aperture in the strap and the connector module received in the mounting aperture. Garthwaite, unlike the invention of claim 30, does not have a structure for preventing the removal of the cable connector modules after the removal of the cover plate 14. There is no structure between the cable connector module 166 and the plate aperture 254 of the cover plate 14 in Garthwaite to prevent access to the cable connector module for removal. Once the front cover plate in Garthwaite is removed, the cable connector module is exposed to be snapped off and removed. Therefore, Garthwaite fails to teach all of the elements set forth in claim 30. Moreover, Garthwaite provides no motivation for and also teaches away from adding an insert between the front cover plate and the flexible mounting tab on the cable connector module to block access to the tab for the removal of the cable connector module. One of the objects of the Garthwaite invention is to provide access to terminations at the face or front of the devices, as opposed to in the rear, and wherein conventional removal and turning of same is not required. Thus, adding an insert between the front cover plate and the cable connector module to block access to the cable connector module for removal purposes would go against the inventive concept of the Garthwaite reference. For at least this reason claim 30 is believed to be patentable over Garthwaite.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 28 and 29 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Lane alone or in view of Orlando and Barna. Claim 1 has been cancelled. The Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of claim 1 is now moot. Claims 2, 4, and 5 have amended to depend from

claim 3 and are patentable over Lane alone or in view of Orlando and Barna for at least the same reason claim 3 is.

Claim 6, as amended, recites a cover assembly including a strap having a front surface and a back surface, the strap defining at least one mounting aperture for receiving a cable connector, wherein the strap is adapted to engage a releasable tab of the cable connector. Unlike the invention of claim 6, Lane, even if the box is read as a strap, does not disclose a strap that is adapted to engage a releasable tab of the cable connector. In Lane, the edge connectors, not the cable connectors, engage to the strap, by a snap fit. The strap in Lane is not adapted to engage either of the data interface assemblies, which are the cable connectors of the present invention. In Lane, the edge connectors connect to the data interface assemblies without the data interface assemblies ever engaging the strap. The strap in Lane is adapted to receive the edge connectors and the inserts with snap-fit connections, however, the strap is not adapted to engage the data interface assemblies. Therefore, Lane, either alone, or in a reasonable combination with Orlando and Barna, fails to teach all of the elements set forth in claim 6, and for at least this reason claim 6 is believed to be patentable.

Claims 11 and 12 are believed to be patentable over Lane alone or in view of Orlando and Barna for at least the same reason claim 6 is.

Claim 28, as amended, recites an outlet box assembly including a cable connector including a flexible push tab coupled to the outlet box, and wherein the cable connector is positioned to be accessible through the plate aperture of the cover plate. As discussed previously, unlike the invention of claim 28, Lane does not disclose an outlet box assembly where the cable connector includes a flexible push tab coupled to the outlet box. In Lane, the edge connectors are the only connectors engaged to the outlet box. The connectors positioned to be accessible through the plate aperture of the cover plate in Lane are the data interface assemblies, which do not include flexible push tabs coupled to the outlet box in Lane. In Lane, the edge connectors connect to the data interface assemblies without the data interface assemblies ever being engagingly coupled to the outlet box. The box in Lane is adapted to snap fit with the edge connectors, which are not cable connectors and are not positioned to be accessible through the plate aperture of the cover plate. Therefore, Lane, either alone, or in a reasonable combination with Orlando and Barna, fails to teach all of the elements set forth in claim 28, and for at least this reason claim 28 is believed to be patentable.

Claim 29 is believed to be patentable over Lane alone or in view of Orlando and Barna for at least the same reason claim 28 is.

Thus, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection.

Claim 24 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Lane. Claim 24 has been cancelled. Thus, the Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of claim 24 is now moot.

Claim 25 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lane in view of Barna and Orlando (5,613,874). Claim 25 has been cancelled. Thus, the Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of claim 25 is now moot.

Claims 26 and 27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Almond in view of Graef. The Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection. Unlike the invention of claim 26, the body of the strap disclosed in Almond does not define a tab slot for receiving a tab of an insert piece. The inserts in Almond engage to the strap with the use of spring fingers of the inserts that have gussets to snap fit under ledges found around the inside perimeter of the strap. Moreover, Almond provides no teaching that would have suggested the desirability of a modification to incorporate the slots of Graef to the strap of Almond. The slots in Graef are used to receive snap connectors. The design of the strap in Almond already has ledges to engage the spring fingers of the inserts. Therefore, there is no motivation to modify the strap in Almond to include slots for engaging the spring fingers of the inserts. For at least this reason, claim 26 is believed to be patentable over Almond in view of Graef. Thus, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection.

Claim 27 is believed to be patentable over Almond in view of Graef for at least the same reason claim 26 is. The Applicant respectfully requests withdrawal of the rejection of claim 27.

Claims 21-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Strang. Claim 21, as amended, recites a one piece insert for an outlet box cover assembly. Unlike the invention of claim 21, Strang does not disclose a one piece insert with retention members and tabs all included on the one piece insert. Strang discloses a circuit board with tabs extending from the back of the circuit board. Strang

also discloses a front cover for an electrical receptacle that has retention members. Even if the circuit board and the front cover were read as insert pieces, they are two separate pieces, unlike the insert piece recited in claim 21. Strang does not disclose a one piece member that has both the tabs and the retention members. Furthermore, Strang has no teaching that suggests the motivation to join the circuit board to the front cover of the receptacle to create a one piece member that has both tabs and retention members. The front cover of Strang is adapted to cover the receptacle housing that houses the circuit board. The cover needs to be separable from the circuit board to function as a cover to the electrical receptacle which houses the circuit board that is connected to a power source through a plurality of connector wires. For at least this reason, claim 21 is believed to be patentable over Strang.

Claims 22-23 are believed to be patentable over Strang for at least the same reason claim 21 is. The Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection.

In the Office Action, the Examiner has rejected claim 25 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Welch in view of Barna and Orlando. Claim 25 has been cancelled. Thus, the Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of claim 25 is now moot.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20, 28, 29 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Germany 8708237 in view of Lane, Strang, Barna and Orlando. Claim 1 has been cancelled. The Applicant respectfully submits that the rejection of claim 1 is now moot. Claims 2, 4, and 5 have amended to depend from claim 3 and are patentable over Germany 8708237 in view of Lane, Strang, Barna and Orlando for at least the same reason claim 3 is.

Claim 6, as amended, recites a cover assembly including a strap having a front surface and a back surface, the strap defining at least one mounting aperture for receiving a cable connector, wherein the strap is adapted to engage a releasable tab of the cable connector. Unlike the invention of claim 6, Germany 8708237, even if the frame (2) is read as a strap, does not disclose a strap that is adapted to engage a releasable tab of the cable connector. In Germany, the cover plate (6), not the strap (2), appears to engage the cable connectors, as illustrated by the tabs being located on the cover plate in FIG. 3. The cover plate (6), once it engages the cable connectors and the inserts (34), appears fixed to the strap (2) with screw fasteners as seen in FIG.

6 of Germany. The strap (2) just provides an aperture for exposing the connectors as seen in FIG. 11. The cover plate (6) is the part that has all the connector attachments. Also, as previously discussed, neither Lane nor Strang discloses a strap that is adapted to engage the cable connector. Barna and Orlando also fail to disclose all the limitations of claim 6. Moreover, none of Lane, Strang, Barna and Orlando, either by itself, or in a reasonable combination with others provides the motivation to modify the strap in Germany to provide for an engagement mechanism to engage the cable connectors. Thus, claim 6 is believed to be patentable over Germany in view of Lane, Strang, Barna, and Orlando for at least this reason.

Claims 11 and 12 are believed to be patentable over Germany in view of Lane, Strang, Orlando and Barna for at least the same reason claim 6 is.

Claim 13, as amended, includes all the limitations of the amended claim 6, and, in addition, a telecommunications outlet box. In view of the above arguments and remarks, claim 13 is believed to be patentable over Germany in view of Lane, Strang, Barna and Orlando for at least the same reason claim 6 is.

Claims 14, 19 and 20 are believed to be patentable over Germany in view of Lane, Strang, Barna and Orlando for at least the same reason claim 13 is.

Claim 28, as amended, recites an outlet box assembly including a cable connector including a flexible push tab coupled to the outlet box, and wherein the cable connector is positioned to be accessible through the plate aperture of the cover plate. Unlike the invention of claim 28, Germany, if parts 1 and 2 are read as an outlet box, does not appear to disclose an outlet box assembly where the cable connector includes a flexible push tab coupled to the outlet box. As discussed previously for claim 6, in Germany, the cover plate (6), not the outlet box made up of the strap (2) and the base cover (1), engages the cable connectors, as illustrated by the tabs being located on the cover plate in FIG. 3. The cover plate (6), once it engages the cable connectors and the inserts (34), appears fixed to the strap (2) with screw fasteners as seen in FIG. 6 of Germany. The strap (2) of the outlex box just provides an aperture for exposing the connectors as seen in FIG. 11. The cover plate (6) is the part that has all the connector attachments. Also, as previously discussed, neither Lane nor Strang discloses cable connectors engagingly coupled to the outlet box. Barna and Orlando also fail to disclose all the limitations of claim 28. Moreover, none of Lane, Strang, Barna and Orlando, either by itself, or in a reasonable combination with others provides the motivation to modify the outlet box in Germany

to provide for an engagement mechanism to engage the cable connectors. Thus, claim 28 is believed to be patentable over Germany in view of Lane, Strang, Barna, and Orlando for at least this reason.

Claim 29 is believed to be patentable over Lane alone or in view of Orlando and Barna for at least the same reason claim 28 is.

Thus, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejection.

Allowable Subject Matter

In the Office Action, the Examiner stated that claims 7-10 and 15-18 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. As noted above, claims 7 and 10 have been rewritten as independent claims 31 and 34, respectively, and claims 8 and 9 have been rewritten as dependent claims 32 and 33, respectively. Also, claims 15 and 18 have been rewritten as independent claims 35 and 38, respectively, and claims 16 and 17 have been rewritten as dependent claims 36 and 37, respectively. Applicants respectfully request allowance of claims 31-38.

Although certain arguments regarding patentability are set forth herein, there may be other arguments and reasons why the claimed invention is patentably distinct. Applicants reserve the right to raise these arguments in the future.

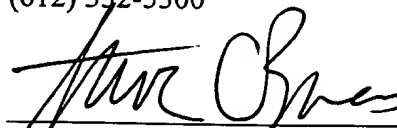
In view of the above amendments and remarks, Applicants respectfully submit that each of the presently pending claims (2-23, and 26-38) is in condition for allowance and requests a notification to that effect. If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would advance the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date:

January 21, 2004



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Serial No.: 09/823,234
 Amendment Dated January 21, 2004
 Reply to Office action of October 6, 2003
 Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

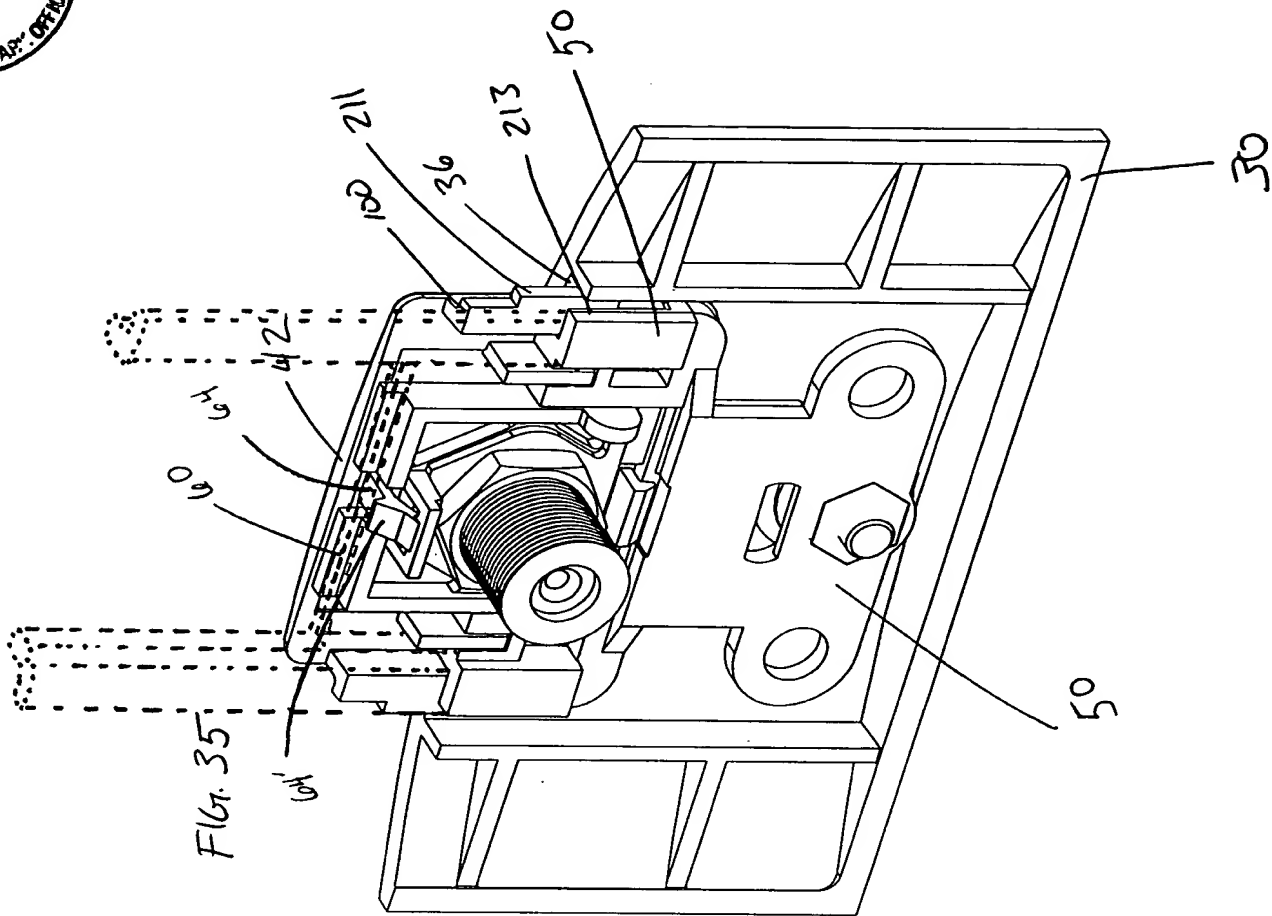


FIG. 35

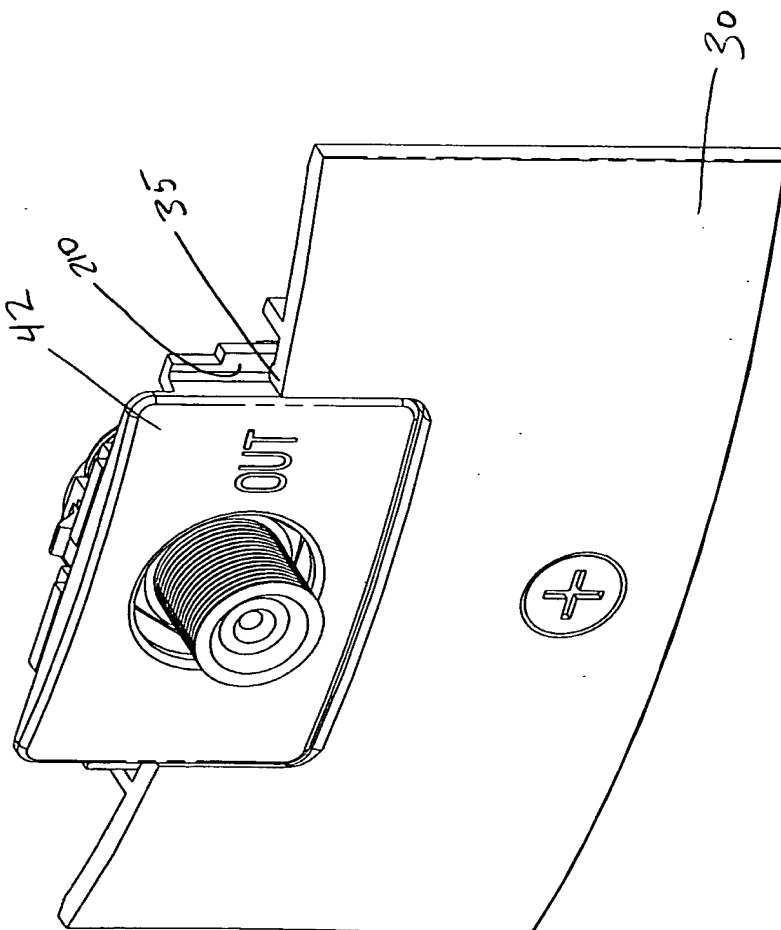


FIG. 34